

## ***District/School Letterhead***

Dear Parents or Guardians,

As the time approaches for the start of the new school year, we would like to share some information about how our students and schools are doing in the areas of student achievement. As some of you may know, the state of South Dakota has recently changed the way student achievement is calculated and considered. More emphasis has been placed on how kids are growing academically through the entire school year, instead of how they perform on a test one time a year. This new system is being put in place a piece at a time with input from the United States Department of Education and other educational groups. Until the system is fully in place your student (s) will continue taking the Dakota STEP tests. Those scores, along with other information, are being used to help determine a School Performance Index or SPI that allows our schools to be compared to others in the state to see how we are doing.

*If using this sample, Districts must insert a brief summary of how each school is doing in their district. It is recommended that each school send out its own copy of the letter instead of trying to put every school's information in one letter. Information should be given about Gap/Non-Gap student groups to allow parents to understand the new way of looking at information specific to the school.*

Detailed reports of how all students in South Dakota scored may be found by going the Department of Education's Webpage at: <http://doe.sd.gov/reportcard/index.aspx> and looking at the state level reports. These reports also include information about how our students did at the state level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP test compared to students in the rest of the United States.

District and school level reports may also be found on the same web site by selecting the school year and the type of report you would like to look at. For help in getting to these reports or understanding what is in these reports, please call your child's school and talk to the teachers or the principal.